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Twenty Five Cents

Spirit

Hills workers save a Christmas

By RON GARBINSKI

The spirit of giving helped turn the best Christmas ever for Mrs. Mary Lou Evans and her family into a tragedy.

Last Tuesday, while Mrs. Evans and her children were at her mother's house for dinner, burglars pulled a truck up to her home in Farmington Hills and hauled away all their Christmas presents, jewelry and several other personal possessions. When they returned about 7:30 that evening, they found their house had been broken into and their Christmas spoiled—at least for the moment.

"When I walked into the house, I really felt empty. I can't explain how I felt. I just didn't know what I was going to do. I never expected anything like this would ever happen to me," said Mrs. Evans, a secretary in the Hills' DPW department. "But the experience taught my family and I a real lesson about human beings."

That lesson came when employees at the Hills City Hall pitched in and provided the Evans family with a Christmas they will never forget. Coming to her rescue, all city departments responded and collected \$118. The police officers' and patrolmen's associations also helped by donating \$200 each to the cause.

Through their combined efforts, Mrs. Evans was able to buy her three children, Mark, 12, Patty, 11, and Mike, 10, presents again and let them experience the true meaning of Christmas.

"I just couldn't believe it," she said. "It's a great feeling to know that so many people care. It is hard to express how I feel for everyone here at city hall. They really helped reaffirm our belief in people and Christmas."

"And it's going to be difficult to really thank everyone for what they did. I wish I could take everyone

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--Mrs. Mary Lou Evans

aside and just hug and thank them from the bottom of my heart," she continued. "The whole experience taught me the true meaning of Christmas and the kids really learned something from it, too. They told me several times that they even prayed for everybody while in church."

After Mrs. Evans overcame the initial shock Tuesday evening, she called a friend, who also works at city hall, and told her about the burglary. By 9:30 the next morning, everyone at city hall knew about the tragedy and already had taken up the \$118 collection, explained Alex Moseff, assistant to the public safety director.

"IN SUCH A SHORT period everyone really reached deep to come up with all that money, especially so close to Christmas," he said. "Everyone here was shocked and grieved by the fact that the gifts were stolen. You could see it on their faces."

"It made me believe that the spirit of Christmas is not dead and that when tragedy strikes, people can be called on to give a special effort."

Hills Detective Capt. Russ Conway, and Gloria Wells, Linda Harris and Larry Elliboff, all employees at city hall, went on a shopping spree with the donations and brought the presents.

Mrs. Evans was offered a television

set, was given a turkey and K-Mart even gave them an additional 20 per cent discount on all Christmas toys.

After the shopping spree, they took the gifts to the home of another city hall secretary and wrapped all the gifts. With the help of Ms. Wells, Karen Meleady, her daughter Debbie, and her husband Leonard, all the presents were wrapped, loaded into a car and taken to the Evans' home where they were distributed under the tree ready for Christmas Day.

"I thought I would have to start my Christmas shopping all over again when I saw the gifts were stolen. There was about \$300 worth of presents and I didn't even have them wrapped yet. The price tags were still on most of them, too," she said.

"But everyone really came through and saved the day for us. It was really nice because with the money we were able to replace all the gifts originally had bought for the kids. The people down at city hall really deserve a big round of applause because they are such a great bunch of people."

"One reaction from the children that really sticks out in my mind is when they said they couldn't get over how many friends I had. And that is the beauty of it all, knowing that people care. That's what Christmas is all about."



Mark, Patty and Mike Evans enjoy their Christmas presents bought with donations from employees at the Farmington Hills City Hall. The employees pitched in and donated

\$818 after learning that the Evans home was burglarized and all their Christmas presents were stolen. (Staff photo by Stephen Cantrell)

High school program helps decide careers

By KIM PUTNAM

Harrison High School has instituted a new course concerned with career preparation of the sophomore class. The Vocational Education Group (VEG) informs students of possible careers with facts on educational background, job advancement and salaries.

From there, the student narrows his interest down to one or two possible careers. The reason for beginning with sophomores is to give them time to change their minds and to take the proper college preparation classes.

Harrison was the first area high school to instruct VEG on a systematic basis. Due to Harrison's non-mandatory study hall attendance policy, students were taken from gym classes. Farmington High School also

is instructing VEG on a systematic basis.

Each counselor connected with the VEG program is trained in group counseling. The program comes in a course package with all instructional materials provided and a certificate must be presented before it can be obtained. Each counselor goes through training in which they are evaluated in terms of progress. After the course, each counselor goes through a trial group therapy session. If successful, they receive their certificate.

Instituted by the Harrison counseling center, the VEG program began eleven weeks ago. The results so far have been "very valuable in helping young people make decisions concerning career goals," according to Ann Areeda, Harrison counselor. Sophomore Mary Salter stated that

the program "was great even though I already knew what I wanted to do."

The program involves five students in each session divided into groups by sex to insure proper career instruction and to help the teachers keep track of who is out of class. This segregation doesn't seem to bother the students.

Within the three day period, students view their interests in terms of job criteria (dealing with people, places or inanimate objects such as tools). Future goals and objectives are discussed and job requirements are also considered. The students are informed of what classes they need to take in high school about various college degrees and the general background needed for their chosen field.

At the end of the VEG program, students are ready to select a career in which they are both interested and suited.

Schools roll with economic punches in 1975

The year for the Farmington School District was marked with financial ups and downs as voters passed a four mill increase, while contrasting state aid cuts at the end of 1975 forced administrators to take a look at paring the budget.

Also newsworthy was the announcement by Supt. Marinus Van Arneyde that he would be retiring at the end of the 1975-76 school year.

Michael Spiece, 18, was elected to the school board, the youngest member to hold a seat on the board.

In April, district voters went to the polls in record numbers to approve a four-mill increase, which added \$4 million to school coffers. The proposition received 60 per cent of the 12,794 votes cast on the issue.

NEARLY 60 PER CENT of the dis-

trict's registered voters visited the polls in each of the four precincts, a turnout so unexpected that school officials had to break out extra voting machines to accommodate the voting lines.

School officials billed the four-mill tax increase as enough to reinstate educational programs cut between 1973 and 1975.

Approval of the four-mill levy added three vocal music consultants to the elementary school program and provided funds to improve the language and science programs. The testing program for grade school children also was restored.

The four mills provided funds both on the elementary and secondary levels for the restoration of school and field trips and outdoor education. If the millage had failed, school officials would have been forced to close one elementary school.

The millage received widespread support from local groups. The Farmington Area Chamber of Commerce board of directors cast their support for the millage increase. Chamber officials said they discussed the issue for a month before making a decision.

Also, a "Kids Counts" committee composed of Farmington district parents banded together to get the millage passed.

School officials were dubious before the election, fearing that voters might be confused because two millage issues were on the ballot.

To insure that funds would be available if the four-mill question failed, the board had placed a two-mill proposal on the ballot. Officials were worried that supporters of the four mill in-

crease might mistakenly vote against the two-mill proposal and leave both proposals insufficiently supported for passage, causing total millage defeat.

BUT APPREHENSION proved unnecessary as voters also approved the two-mill increase with 79 per cent approval. Since the four mill increase was approved, the two-mill proposal didn't go into effect.

In August, a curve ball was thrown at the school district when the state legislature voted a decrease in state aid, reducing funds in the Farmington district by \$121,000. The reduction was based on the total revenue generated by a school district.

Farmington Schools Business Manager William Prisk said the district has anticipated a loss in state revenue before the cut because it had fewer

students and a higher state equalized valuation.

In December the district learned it was to lose an additional 17 per cent in state aid because of the budget crunch outlined by Gov. William Milliken. This added \$344,000 which the district would lose in addition to the previous state aid cut.

Since the district's 1975-76 budget provided for an anticipated balance of \$55,000 to be left in its accounts at the end of the school year, reductions of \$344,000 required the district to adjust its budget by \$289,000 just to balance the books as required by state law.

The district's 1975-76 budget is \$23,630,000.

District voters weren't as enthused in the school board trustee elections. Only five per cent, or 1,840 voters, turned out to elect Michael Spiece to the board. He defeated incumbent

Ann Rodeberg. It took 502 votes to put him on the board.

Spiece, a graduate of Farmington's Harrison High School, had been a long-time spectator at board meetings throughout the years.

Van Arneyde announced his resignation in December. He came to the district in 1967 as assistant superintendent of instruction. He worked at that post until 1972, when he took over the reins of superintendent from Rod Smith.

The 61-year-old administrator has served in Michigan schools for 40 years—37 of them in administration. Prior to coming to Farmington, he was principal of Southfield High School. He was professor of education at Eastern Michigan University where he earned his BA degree. He received his master's from Wayne State University.

Blaze destroys motorcycle store

Three Farmington Hills fire units responded to an early Christmas Day fire which completely destroyed the Honda House of Farmington, 3629 Grand River in Farmington Hills.

Fire fighters battled the blaze for about three hours before finally bringing it under control, said Farmington Hills Director of Public Safety, Ronald Holko.

The fire was first reported at 1:58 a.m. Thursday morning and was extinguished before sunrise.

As of Friday night, the cause of the

fire was unknown and an investigation now is underway to determine its cause, according to officials.

Holko said arson and possibly burglary are suspected in the fire but his department must wait until its investigations are complete before acknowledging the cause of the fire.

Damage to the building and its inventory, mostly motorcycles, was estimated between \$125,000 and \$175,000. Further investigation is needed before a final estimate of damage can be made, Holko said.

INSIDE

Early Deadlines

Due to the holiday next Thursday, your Observer & Eccentric will be delivered Friday and all deadlines will be moved up. Classified ads must be called in to the phone room by noon, Tuesday; space reservation for display advertising must be made by noon, Monday, and news copy must be in by Monday evening. All offices will close at 3 p.m. Wednesday, December 31.

News Section A
Columns 6
Sports 4.5
Suburban Life Section B
Classified Section B.C



An early Christmas morning fire gutted the Honda House of Farmington and caused an estimated \$175,000 worth of damage

to the building and the motorcycles inside. (Staff photo by Craig Newman)